

**Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee
(SSTMD AC) Meeting Summary
May 14, 2009**

1, 2. Introductions, Review of April minutes, Chair's Comments: Members and guest introduced themselves. April's minutes were unavailable – tabled for the June meeting.

Chair Jim Polk introduced **Chris Gillis**, Aide to **Councilmember George Leventhal**.

Item 3-Councilmember George Leventhal resolution to abolish SSTMD AC: **Mr. Gillis** explained that the two bills proposed by **Mr. Leventhal** (20-09 and 21-09) reducing the county's Boards and Advisory Committees from 84 to 72, are based on an earlier resolution introduced by **Mr. Leventhal and Councilmember Marilyn Praisner** in 2004 and 2005.

Mr. Leventhal is reintroducing the resolutions in order to reduce county spending. The Committee Evaluation Review Board (CERB) recommended the elimination of the Silver Spring TMD Advisory Committee and the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee in its 2004 report. Their recommendations were based on the advisory committee's difficulty in retaining and finding new members, overlap between the Silver Spring Citizen Advisory Board and the Silver Spring Urban District, and the time taken from county employees to perform committee business. He welcomed comments from the committee.

Mr. Polk presented a letter to **Mr. Gillis** outlining the committee's objections to **Mr. Leventhal's** proposals. **Mr. Polk** noted that such a reduction in committees also reduces citizen participation. The TMD Advisory Committee provides a forum for businesses and citizens to interact. **Mr. Polk** added that the Citizens Advisory Board does not have the comparable business representation found on the TMD Advisory Committee, so would reduce the voice of the business community.

Andrew Wexler asked why the SSTMD AC was being targeted for elimination, while no other committees had been selected. Silver Spring is still revitalizing and the buses have been relocated due to the Silver Spring Transit Center construction, requiring monitoring and input from the committee. The committee also provided frequent input to the planning process for the Interim Operations Site (IOS), helping to avoid potential traffic problems. Committee members volunteer their time, and the meeting refreshments and space are both donated by Discovery Communications. He reiterated **Mr. Polk's** point about the committee providing a voice for the business community.

Mr. Gillis stated that he would make sure the County Council and **Mr. Leventhal** received the committee's comments.

Sgt. Tom Harmon stated that the TMD Advisory Committee is a way for him to actively serve the community and communicate with state and county governments.

Ms. Brecher stated that the County Executive has not taken a position on this issue and clarified that the difference with the SSTMD AC and other boards and committees is that this committee focuses on Transit Demand Management (TDM). County staff relies on input from the committee in operating the Silver Spring Transportation Management District.

Mr. Gillis stated that the committee hearings for this resolution are scheduled for June 22, 2009, and asked that any additional input be submitted before that date.

Item 4 – Councilmember Nancy Floreen: **Mr. Polk** and attendees reintroduced themselves to the Councilmember.

Ms. Floreen introduced herself and informed the committee about the \$80 million school budget deficit. The county asked the state to cover the cost and the state has not yet decided. If the state does not cover the deficit, then the county will have to find a way to fund the \$80 million, impacting other programs. She thanked the TMD Advisory Committee for the work done and asked about bus service management under the IOS.

Mr. Polk stated that everything seemed to be going well. **Mr. Polk** explained that Silver Spring is the largest bus to bus transfer hub in the state, and the county police have placed extra crossing guards at some intersections involved in the Transit Center construction.

Terrie O'Steen said there are 172 bus trips going in and out of the IOS daily.

Ms. Floreen said the governor's recommendations on the Purple Line and the Corridor Cities Transitway will come out sometime in June and will be submitted to the federal government this fall.

Congress is rewriting the SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization. Funding for transportation projects expires this fall. **Ms. Floreen** explained the reason why some funding, which comes from the hybrid gas tax, was cut is because when the state is trying to save money transportation is always the first to go. In spite of these cuts, however, the Council has been able to keep bus services running by raising parking rates and the mass transit tax.

Jim Carlson asked **Ms. Floreen** to explain the trigger limit under the charter. **Ms Floreen** said that the charter limit states that the tax revenue from one year to the next cannot exceed last year's tax revenue + adjusted cost of living and other taxes. So the tax rate is reduced to adjust the incoming revenue.

Sande Brecher asked **Ms. Floreen** about the pending PLD bill. **Ms. Floreen** said the bill will allow money from the PLD to be put into mass transit. She said the Council decided to raise Bethesda PLD fees and the Parking Tax. However Council is still deliberating on other actions.

Tom Collins stated that the Silver Spring PLD is suffering due to county government's mismanagement of its funding.

Ms Floreen asked if there anything else the Council needed to work on.

Ms Brecher informed **Ms. Floreen** about the Silver Spring PLD, stating it had 31.5 percent end of year FY09 fund reserves. Those reserves will go to fund VanGo in FY10.

Mr. Collins asked **Ms. Floreen** for her comments on the committee's FY10 budget priorities document presented to the County Executive.

Ms. Floreen said she was unaware of the budget document because there were 160 separate testimonies before the council regarding the budget. She asked that the committee notify her office if we have any transportation issues so that the Council can address them.

Mr. Polk stated that the committee has been trying to get the county to expand VanGo hours to include evenings and weekends perhaps by increasing the budget rates of the PLD. Metro has cited the VanGo as a mode of transportation for the disabled, so Silver Spring was able to add another bus to the route; however the hours of service did not increase. There was advertising to the disabled community, but no evening and weekend hours.

Ms. Floreen said the positive thing about transportation funding budget is that capital funding is adequate and the market is good for construction contracts. However, the bad thing is that operational funding is dependent on what the state decides to do with the \$3.8 billion in stimulus funds from the federal government. She added that the county should know the status of these funds by May 15th.

Ms. Brecher stated the Silver Spring Super Fare Share funding was reduced \$45,000 in the FY10 budget. The program will be able to maintain existing employers and may be able to bring in a few new smaller employers.

Ms. O'Steen stated that 43 companies participate in Silver Spring's SFS program representing about 1,500 total eligible employees.

Mr. Wexler stated that the committee was waiting to hear the findings and recommendations of the Pedestrian Safety Audit. The Audit looked at intersections, signage, and signal improvements on Georgia Avenue.

Mr. Collins stated that along with asking for additional pedestrian funding that we also continue to ask for police funding because they have to enforce the pedestrian safety laws.

Ms. Floreen said police funding has been taking hits, and that their right to disability payments due to injury in the line of duty is in danger of being taken away.

Samantha Matzo commented that commercial vacancies have nearly doubled in downtown Silver Spring - from 7 percent to 15 percent.

Ms. Floreen wrapped up her statements by reminding committee members to bring their issues to the Council.

Mr. Polk asked for a formal vote on submitting the committee's letter to Councilmember Leventhal. The motion was approved and seconded.

Item 5 – Updates: TMD/DOT/Police/Other Count Updates: **Sgt. Harmon** distributed Preliminary Traffic Collision Statistics for 1st Quarter 2009, which include 3rd District citation totals for major arterials, major collision locations and enforcement results, and speed camera locations.

Mr. Carlson reminded committee members about Bike to Work Day, Friday May 15th. Silver Spring Pit Stops include Discovery and White Oak/FDA. **Mr. Carlson** announced the kick-off of a new Commuter Services e-Newsletter, with a spring edition included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Brecher announced that the County was faced with closing a nearly \$600 million budget gap. **Mr. Leggett's** budget as submitted to the Council had proposed cutting some Ride On service in an effort to avoid raising taxes and fees. The budget ultimately avoided most cuts to Ride On. Other budget items of note:

- Council voted to increase the subsidies for low income seniors and low income disabled residents to participate in the *Call 'N Ride* program, the taxi voucher program.
- Funding was maintained at the FY09 level for the Friendship Heights Super Fare Share program (\$127,000).
- Reduced the amount of funding available to reset traffic signals county wide to the new 3.5 ft per second crossing standard. This will take one additional year to complete – expected completion date FY13.
- Pedestrian Safety Campaign had some funding restored that the County Executive had proposed be cut. This was not because the Executive did not recognize the priority, but was faced with a large budget gap.
- Funding for the Hiker-Biker Trail was partly restored, which had been cut in the Executive's budget.
- Fifty-thousand dollars was approved for a cell phone parking payment pilot in downtown Bethesda.
- Council approved \$500,000 for a bus rapid transit study. **Councilmember Marc Elrich** has proposed a county wide network of BRT lines.
- There is funding for a parking management study that will be done as part of a joint study between DOT and Park and Planning.
- The budget retains Ride On's *Seniors Ride Free* and *Kids Ride Free* programs.
- The County will retain the C-pass, the free Ride On pass available to all county employees.
- Parking fees will be raised in Bethesda, and in North Bethesda; Council staff has recommended looking at raising parking fees in other areas.
- North County Depot construction has been deferred by one additional year. This is the new Ride On facility in the Clarksburg area, which has also been downsized from a capacity of 250 buses to 120. The county will not have use of the facility until about four years hence.
- Expedited Bill 17-09, sponsored by **Councilmember Nancy Floreen**, is under consideration by Council. The bill would enable transit service that serves a parking lot district (PLD) to receive funding from that PLD. PLD funds will be used to fund transit if it serves a PLD.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35

Next meeting date: June 11, 2009

Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee (SSTMD AC)
Attendance Sheet
May 14, 2009

Voting Members (12)			
Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Chamber Members (3)			
Samantha Mazo	Linowes and Blocher LLP	X	
James S. Polk, Chairman	Technology Service Corporation	X	
Tom Collins	Atlantech Online	X	
Citizens Advisory Board Members (3)			
Edward Furgol	Kemp Mill, Four Corners, East SS		X
Charles Segerman, Vice Chairman	North & West Sector Plan Area		X
Andrew Wexler	CBD Resident	X	
TMD Employers less than 50 employees (3)			
Julian Leidman (pending replacement)	Small Business Representative		X
Suvita Melehy	Melehy & Associates		X
Cathy Wilde	Solid Waste Assoc of North America	X	
TMD Employers with 50 or more employees (3)			
G. Michael Price	Discovery Communications	X	
Robin Goudy	Social & Scientific Systems	X	
Vacant			
Non-Voting Members (4)			
Sandra Brecher, DOT Transit Services	DOT Director or Designee	X	
Shahriar Etemadi	M-NCPPC	X	
Sergeant Thomas Harmon	Montgomery County Police	X	
Staff			
Terrie O'Steen	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Nakengi Byrd	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Jim Carlson	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Guests			
Councilmember Nancy Floreen	County Council	X	
Chris Gillis	Aide to Councilmember Marc Elrich	X	
Roylene Roberts	Acting Director-SS Regional Services Center	X	
Mel Tull	SS Regional Services Center	X	

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